

# Positive

*or it's pointless*



## Fact Sheet

### Supportive Coaches – getting the most out of sport

#### Getting the most out of sport

Being a coach is a rewarding experience where you can help children and young people develop skills and self-belief that will have a lifelong impact.

#### As a coach, you help children:

- Develop a wide range of motor skills e.g. balance, running, catching, jumping, throwing
- Improve co-ordination, flexibility, strength and fitness
- Develop healthy and active habits that will influence future lifestyles
- Develop confidence and self-esteem
- Learn cooperation and teamwork
- Have fun and meet friends
- Learn goal setting and positive thinking
- Learn from mistakes
- Develop values such as respect and fair play.

#### What children want

Children want to have fun, learn new things and be with their friends. Children have a great sporting experience when parents, coaches and officials are positive and supportive.

#### Children want their coaches to:

- Support them and give them encouragement
- Believe in them and be proud of them, no matter what
- Treat all children equally and with respect and patience
- Teach them new things and be realistic about their abilities and skill level
- Let them have fun.

#### Children don't want their coaches to:

- Embarrass them through abusing team mates, parents or officials
- Yell critical comments during or after the game
- Pressure them to set goals or achievements
- Prioritise winning over fun and personal development.

#### Strategies for game day

##### Before the game

- Encourage your team to have a go, do their best and have fun!
- Tell the team that you are proud of them, no matter what the outcome
- Remind the team to treat every person like they would like to be treated
- Remind the team of new skills they have learnt and encourage them to try these skills in the game
- Have a pre-game huddle and pre-game cheer
- Ask your supporters to vote for a Most Improved, Best and Fairest and Most Positive Supporter.

# Let's make junior sport positive everyday

## During the game

- Cheer for every child in your team and recognise good play – even if it's another team member or an opponent. There are other parents watching the game too and they will appreciate your good sportsmanship
- Keep it positive, don't criticise or constantly give instructions from the sidelines
- Respect the decision-making of the officials and refrain from negative and offensive comments.

## After the game

- Congratulate your team
- Thank the other team, the officials and all the supporters
- Encourage your team to celebrate their good play, no matter what the outcome of the game
- Tell the team who the spectators thought were the Most Improved, Fairest and Most Positive Players
- Congratulate your team on their good plays and achievements; encourage them where they have identified their own mistakes.

## At training

- Ask your team if they had fun and what they learnt. Listen to what they have to say
- Congratulate your team on their performance and achievements.

## Communicating with officials

- Respect the decisions of the officials - remember they may have a clearer perspective than you and they are doing the best they can
- If you want to clarify a decision, wait until after the game:
  - remember to let your emotions settle before speaking and listen to the official's response
  - let the coach respond without your interruptions and listen
  - agree to a resolution, even if you agree to disagree!
- Recognise that the officials, like yourself, are likely to be volunteers. Find ways to appreciate them for supporting children in sport
- Treat the officials the same way you would like to be treated if you were in their position.

## Communicating with parents

- Always support the parents by not speaking negatively about them in public, especially in front of their children
- Remember that parents are both excited and protective about their child's involvement. They may not know all the rules of the game or how to address conflict
- Get to know the parents and appreciate their support of your team
- If a parent is displaying inappropriate behaviour, follow your club's methods in addressing the situation. This could include:
  - letting the match official/referee handle the situation
  - taking the parent aside privately and speaking to the parent about their influence on their children
  - advising your club about the parent's behaviour.

Most parents want to be involved in their child's sport and may not be aware how they can best support them. You could consider:

- Asking the parents if there are ways they would like to be involved - perhaps they could join an open sports team, be an assistant coach, official or run the canteen
- Talking to parents about what simple things children can do to practice at home
- Giving them ideas on how they can be more familiar with the values and rules of the sport so they can talk to their children about it.

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